

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4513

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NDP DEVELOPMENTS

REF: SEOUL 4102

1. WITH SCHEDULED NDP CONVENTION SIX WEEKS AWAY AND RETURN FROM ABROAD OF TWO MAJOR CONTENDERS, KIM YONG-SAM AND YI CHOL-SUNG, THE PARTY LEADERSHIP RACE IS PICKING UP MOMENTUM.

2. THREE OF THE FOUR ANNOUNCED CONTENDERS, KIM YONG-SAM, KO HUNG-MUN AND CHONG HAE-YONG MET JULY 9 AT KIM'S REQUEST TO WORK OUT GROUND RULES FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE CAMPAIGNS. THEY REPORTEDLY AGREED NOT TO SLANDER EACH OTHER AND REACHED ACCORD ON A POLICY OF STRONG ONE MAN PARTY LEADERSHIP. THE FOURTH CANDIDATE YI CHOL-SUNG REFUSED TO ATTEND MEETING ON GROUNDS THAT FOUR LEADERS HAD NO AUTHORITY TO SPEAK FOR ENTIRE PARTY, RATHER THAT CONVENTION PREPARATIONS SHOULD BE LEFT TO SPECIAL AD HOC COMMITTEE ALREADY GIVEN THIS TASK. YI HAS TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE SAW NO POINT IN ATTENDING MEETING WHICH HE VIEWED AS OBVIOUS MOVE BY KIM TO PORTRAY HIMSELF AS LOYAL PARTY STATESMAN, STANDING ABOVE PARTISAN

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TACTICS.

3. PERSONAL CULTIVATION OF CONVENTION DELEGATES IS CONTINUING. KO HUNG-MUN AND CHONG HAE-YONG REMAIN THE MOST ACTIVE BEHIND THE SCENES OPERATIVES, WITH KO'S SUPERIOR ORGANIZATION GIVING HIM THE ADVANTAGE. YI CHOL-SUNG WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM JAPAN TELLS US THAT HE WILL START TO MAKE THE ROUNDS OF THE PROVINCES BEGINNING JULY 13. KIM YONG-SAM HAS SAID THAT HE WILL HOLD BACK FROM PERSONAL VISITS TO PROVINCES UNTIL RELATIVELY LATE IN CAMPAIGN. BY STAGING EVENTS SUCH AS LEADERS MEETING HE IS USING MEDIA TO KEEP HIMSELF IN PUBLIC VIEW.

4. JUNE 28 KNP BOAT SINKING HAS PROVIDED ONE "SAFE" ISSUE ON WHICH ALL NDP CANDIDATES CAN CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT. PARTY HAS DEMANDED JOINT HOME AFFAIRS-DEFENSE COMMITTEE SESSION WHICH WOULD ALSO LOOK INTO REPORT OF "SPY BOAT" PENETRATION NEAR PUSAN. ALSO NDP JULY 9 ISSUED SEVEN POINT POLICY STATEMENT ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY WHICH CALLS FOR FOUR POWER COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM TO GUARANTEE PEACE ON PENINSULY. BY AGREEING ON THESE MOVES PARTY LEADERS HAVE REMOVED SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES FROM LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN.

5. IN SPITE OF INCREASED PACE OF ACTIVITIES ALL CANDIDATES AGREE THAT NO FACTION YET HAS MORE THAN 150 OF THE ROUGHLY 700 DELEGATE VOTES. MOREOVER, MOST OF 51 NDP ASSEMBLYMEN REMAIN UNCOMMITTED WITH THE DECLARED SUPPORT AS FOLLOWS: YI CHOL-SUNG (8), KIM YONG-SAM (4), KO HUNG-MUN (4), CHONG HAE-YONG (1). NON-COMMITTED GROUPS ARE "INDEPENDENTS" (9), "OLD YU CHIN-SAN" FACTION (5) AND A GROUP LED BY SECRETARY GENERAL SIN TO-HWAN *1). THERE ARE REPORTEDLY 12 UNAFFILIATED NDP ASSEMBLYMEN.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH KIM YONG-SAM AND TO LESSER EXTENT YI CHOL-SUNG ARE WORKING TO BUILD DISTINCT NATIONAL IMAGES AND MASS FOLLOWINGS AS TRUE OPPOSITION LEADERS. PARTY AND PUBLIC REMAIN SKEPTICAL.
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RATHER THAN JUMP ON ANY BAND WAGONS THE LARGE NUMBER OF UNCOMMITTED DELEGATES CAN BE EXPECTED TO REMAIN UNCOMMITTED AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, WHILE WAITING FOR MOST PROPITIOUS MOMENT TO BARGAIN FOR DEALS TO THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL ADVANTAGE.
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